



H.R. 1239 - National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Reauthorization Act of 2007

Floor Situation

H.R. 1239 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-FL) on February 28, 2007. The bill was ordered to be reported from the Committee Natural Resources.

H.R. 1239 is expected to be considered on the floor on July 23, 2007.

Summary

This legislation directs the Secretary of the Interior to hire staffers to assist in carrying out programs in the National Underground Railroad, which consists of historic stops along the route used by slaves seeking freedom.

The legislation authorizes \$2.5 million to increase the staff and restore the sites along the trail.

Background

The Underground Railroad was a system of people and “safe houses” that assisted fugitive slaves that were trying to escape to the north. Those involved in the Underground Railroad were only knowledgeable of the next stop on the system and not the entire route. This system effectively moved hundreds of slaves each year. The “safe houses” and businesses along the route would provide food, shelter and clothing to the travelers. Much of the travel took place at night to avoid getting caught. This system was used during the late 18th century and lasted well into the Civil War. The Railroad crossed racial and religious divisions as well as sectional differences.

This legislation helps to preserve historically significant places along the trail.

Cost

Assuming appropriation of the authorized amount, CBO estimates that implementing H.R. 1239 would cost \$2 million in 2008 and \$12.5 million over the 2008-2012 period. Enacting the legislation would have no effect on direct spending or revenues.

Staff Contact

For questions or further information contact Luke Hatzis at (202) 226-2302.